

complete construction, improve it and rent out to individual Quebecers. And in Quebec a great many housing units belonged to CMHC. However, in view of management restraint, it decided to sell its properties, which were often rented 40 per cent to 50 per cent below market value, which means that indirectly CMHC was helping underprivileged people to have adequate housing at minimal cost. To recover its money, it is now selling its properties in Quebec. Before selling, it asked the Quebec Housing Corporation Authority, which is under provincial jurisdiction, to make offers on all its units. The Quebec Housing Corporation did in fact buy some of them, but at a minimal price.

● (1752)

However, I would like to explain also the difference between the role of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Quebec Housing Corporation. The main function of the Quebec Housing Corporation is not to lend money to promote construction and help Quebecers become homeowners but to have buildings built or bought to rent them to underprivileged people so the poorer people in our society can have adequate housing.

I think the Quebec Housing Corporation should have bought a lot more of those units in Quebec. Furthermore, I realize that the Quebec Housing Corporation should have incurred deficits because its duty is to rent its housing units according to the capacity of the tenants to pay and not the market value. However, those deficits incurred by the Quebec Housing Corporation are financed 50 per cent by the federal government and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I realize that CMHC rented its buildings to individuals at reduced rates for a long time, because then the federal government was financing 100 per cent of those tax credits, but according to the law, those credits should be paid half by the federal government and half by the provincial government.

That is an example where the federal government is tightening its belt, recovering money and saving. I can also mention others, Mr. Speaker. In my riding there is the St-Vincent-de-Paul penitentiary. And now civil servants are being laid off, particularly staff working in the kitchens, and also office staff and even guards. And again the opposition which wants to spend \$1.5 billion on a tax credit for housing is accusing the government of overspending. This is one specific area where we are saving the taxpayers money. In fact, I could mention all the departments, but one department where most members can see a saving in their ridings is the Post Office, which is spending a lot less than before. In the Montreal metropolitan area, for example, the Post Office has reduced the number of available boxes where people can deposit their mail. In the rural areas of my riding, we have boxes located on street corners, and the people living there must go and get their mail at those boxes. There again we have reduced the number of boxes and, of course, in doing so, we had to relocate them in

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perhaps somewhat more strategic and more central places so they could accommodate all the people in that same area.

Bill C-28 aims among other things at limiting the indexing of pension for public servants. I am not saying that it aims at eliminating indexing, but rather at limiting it. In my opinion, it would be a good thing if our public servants were limited to a reasonable amount because there is absolutely no restriction for most Canadian workers. There is also the unemployment insurance policy where there have been carefully thought-out cutbacks which will also save money for the federal treasury. For instance, in the past benefits represented a maximum of 66½ per cent of the insured salary. This has been reduced to 60 per cent. We have also increased the number of weeks of work required for employees to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. I cannot give the list of everything that has been done in all areas because I would then have to list all the departments as there have been significant cutbacks in each one of them.

I noted one thing earlier when I read the speech made by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens). He said that if, instead of issuing federal government bonds on November 15 we were to postpone the issue until November 22, because this bill will not have been passed yet, this would cost \$30 million more to the federal treasury in interest charges. He then said: If this bill is not passed, instead of November 22, it could be November 29. This would mean one week more and cost another \$13 million. If the members of the Progressive Conservative party are serious, they should give us their support as soon as possible so that this bill can be passed and we can avoid needlessly paying current interests on Canadian bonds. I therefore urge them to act like responsible managers and responsible Canadians and allow this bill to pass as soon as possible so that the interests charged to Canada will be as low as possible.

[*English*]

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to make some comments with respect to the bill currently before the House. I always enjoy the opportunity to speak on measures that are constructive, measures which offer some means by which the problems facing us as a nation can be resolved. Unfortunately, the bill before us is one which somehow brings with it a feeling of unhappiness and unease because we are being asked in this measure, the first of economic consequence to be introduced this session, to authorize the borrowing of a further \$7 billion for the financing of government operations. This, in itself is an indication that we are facing serious difficulties. It is an indication that the government has failed to come to grips with the problems which are besetting the nation. It also indicates that the administration has failed to find solutions for the problems which are of current concern, not only to members of this House but to Canadians generally. So, as we face the task of commenting on this legislation we find it necessary to go